



Wycombe Wanderers 2,
Aylesbury United 1

Defence will be the Blues strong point

A LAST minute goal by Jimmy Jacobs gave Wycombe Wanderers an exciting victory in their last pre-season friendly at home to Aylesbury United on Tuesday, writes MICHAEL KNOX.

It was a fitful display by the Wanderers, who fielded nearly their strongest side. Only in the last half hour did they string their game together and to run out deserved winners against progressive Southern League opponents.

The winning goal came from Wycombe's simplest, most direct move of the game. Steve Long played the ball into the penalty area, Gary Fowles chested it down to Jacobs who drove it low past the goal-keeper from the edge of the area.

Long was also involved in the move that earned Wycombe the equaliser in the 64th minute after Aylesbury had taken a surprise half-time lead. He broke away down the right and crossed to the near post, where the visitors player manager Leo Markham foolishly handled the ball.

Howard Kennedy, so reliable from the penalty spot last season, kept up the good work by firing the ball into the top left hand corner.

Workmanlike

Aylesbury, a workmanlike side who tackle strongly, certainly upset the Wanderers rhythm in the opening stages and a fierce drive by Kennedy which struck the cross bar was their only perceptible chance.

Overall the defence looks sound and remember, Steve Hardwick and Paul Birdseye have yet to play a game.

Young Steve Toll from Flackwell Heath, once again impressed at right back, while Bobby Davies' experience at the heart of the defence was most valuable.

However the back-line were prone to the occasional lapse, especially against the inswinging corner to the near post.

There will be some recriminations, too, about the Aylesbury goal which came right on half time. Full back Kevin Tilley was allowed to progress right into the penalty before laying a ball into the path of Chris Nash. He crashed it against the bar and little Vince Melisi nipped to prod home the rebound.

WYCOMBE: G. Lester, S. Toll, G. Borg, R. Davies, G. Fowles, H. Kennedy, R. Dell (sub: M. Holfield 52 mins), J. Jacobs, S. Long, T. Glynn, P. Miles (sub: R. Ashenden 62 mins).

AYLESBURY: K. Baker, K. Tilley, P. Mead, C. Nash (sub: D. Evans 77 mins), L. Merham, D. Parrott, D. Jones, L. Smith (sub: V. Melisi 16 mins), A. Jeffreys, B. Holmes, G. Harthill, Sub: K. Davies on for Melisi 73 mins.

Referee: A. Rogers (High Wycombe).
Half-time 0-1. Scorers: Wycombe - Kennedy (pen 64 mins), Jacobs (90); Aylesbury: Melisi (45).

Attendance: 400.

WYCOMBE Wanderers rounded off last season's Berger Isthmian League programme better than any other team, with seven successive victories.

They will be hoping to carry on where they left off when they open the new Premier Division campaign at home to Leytonstone/Ilford tomorrow (Saturday).

Just how much Wycombe have improved since the arrival of Mike Keen will soon become apparent.

During the summer, there has been a change of personnel, with the departure of strikers Terry Scott and Gary Toll, the signing of Terry Glynn and the return of Bobby Davies.

I now understand that Gary Toll, who went out to the Middle East to work, will be back in England soon —

MICHAEL KNOX previews the start of Wycombe's new campaign

perhaps to stay. Wanderers will be hoping so.

Judging by the players available, Wycombe should certainly be able to defend well this season as they have a depth of excellent back four players.

For tomorrow's game Mike Keen is likely to rely on the same formation that played against Aylesbury,

with possibly the experienced Keith Mead replacing promising youngster Steve Toll at right back.

Match fit

Club captain Paul Birdseye, because of a recent illness, and Steve Hardwick, who has only just

come back from holiday, will not be considered for selection.

As the manager is keen to play Davies in the centre of the defence, Hardwick could be the unlucky one when all the players are match fit.

Mid-field looks far less strong with four players — Bob Dell, Howard Kennedy, Jimmy Jacobs and Mick Holfield — fighting for three positions.

Holfield, who seems to have recovered from last season's nagging injury, certainly injected some pace into the mid-field on Tuesday and could oust Dell from the left side position.

The three forwards seem to pick themselves — Paul Miles, Terry Glynn and Steve Long, although it might not be long before Andy Hunt, scorer of two hat-tricks for the reserve team this season, forces his way into contention.

Crazy

Tony Price is not match fit after a recent holiday and will not be considered.

Mike Keen admits that the squad is not as strong as he wants it. "There are a few problems," he says, "we need a couple of other players. But we couldn't get them as the transfer market has gone crazy. We want value for money."

With seven of their first ten games away from home, Wycombe have a tough task if they are to get off to the important good start.

So victory over Leytonstone/Ilford is doubly important — but they will not be a pushover, having won last season's Division One championship by an amazing 17 point margin.

This was the first time that these two great clubs of the past had played as one after being thrown together by force of circumstance.

It was certainly a successful marriage and with former Barking and Dagenham striker Bryn Key added to their line-up, they will be hoping to make some impression at the top level this season.

Blues will be keen for victory to put them in good heart for their prospective tricky visit to Harrow Borough on Monday evening.

Reserves unbeaten

WYCOMBE Reserves go into their first ever Suburban League match at Farnborough tomorrow (Saturday) with an unbeaten record in their pre-season friendlies.

In their last two matches, Wycombe won 3-2 at Beaconsfield United on Saturday thanks to Andy Hunt's second hat-trick of the season.

Then on Tuesday night they drew 0-0 with Hellenic League side Flackwell Heath, who themselves have enjoyed a fine build-up.